

Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 ACDA-12 CIAE-00 INR-10 IO-13

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INFO AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

AMEMBASSY MEXICO

AMEMBASSY VIENNA

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 3 BUENOS AIRES 5034

USIAEA

E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS MNUC, PARM, ENRG, TECH, AR

SUBJECT RECENT DEVELOPMENTS: ARGENTINE NUCLEAR POLICY AND PROGRAMS

REF: BUENOS AIRES 4680

1. SUMMARY: ARGENTINE NUCLEAR OFFICIALS FEEL THAT BRAZILIANS ARE DICTATING NUCLEAR POLICY TO THE US AS WELL AS TO OTHER NUCLEAR SUPPLIERS. THEY INDICATE THAT BRAZIL IS RECEIVING A COMPLETE FUEL CYCLE FROM WEST GERMANY WITHOUT MOVING TOWARD WAIVING TLATELOLCO INTO FORCE, TAKING OUT FULL SCOPE SAFEGUARDS, NOR SIGNING THE NPT. IT IS THEIR IMPRESSION ARGENTINA IS BEING ISOLATED AND DISCRIMINATED AGAINST FROM THE STANDPOINT OF TRANSFER OF NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY FOR NOT SIGNING THE NPT AND THE LONDON CLUB MEMBERS ARE HOLDING THIS OVER THEIR HEAD.

-- THE CNEA HAS NOT MADE A DECISION ON ATUCHA II POWER REACTOR BECAUSE CNEA OFFICIALS ARE DISCOURAGED

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WITH THE CANADIANS FOR RENEGING ON THE ORIGINAL AGREEMENT FOR TECHNOLOGY AND SAFEGUARDS ON THE RIO TERCERO CANDU PROJECT AND ARE LEERY OF GETTING INVOLVED WITH AN UNTESTED 600 MW GERMAN REACTOR FOR ATUCHA II. HOWEVER, THE ITALIANS, WHO WOULD PROVIDE THE ELECTRIC PLANT FACILITY FOR THE CANDU, ARE WORKING HARD TO CONVINCE CONEA THE ONLY VALID NATURAL URANIUM

SYSTEM IS THE CANDU AND OF THE ADVANTAGES OF THE CANADIAN/ITALIAN PARTNERSHIP WHICH WOULD GIVE ARGENTINE FIRMS WIDER PARTICIPATION. BECAUSE OF THE INITIATION OF NUCLEAR COOPERATIVE PROGRAMS WITH OTHER LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES INCLUDING THE PROVISION OF RESEARCH REACTORS, CNEA IS INTERESTED IN PROGRAMS FOR OBTAINING TECHNOLOGY FOR USE OF LEU IN RESEARCH REACTORS. THIS INCREASES THE ARGENTINE INTEREST IN INFCE AND IN THE US PROGRAMS ON REDUCING ENRICHMENT LEVELS FOR RESEARCH REACTOR FUELS.

-- CNEA AND MFA OFFICIALS WOULD LIKE TO EXAMINE EXPANDED COOPERATION WITH THE US UNDER THE NEW NON-PROLIFERATION ACT. HOWEVER, THE PROBLEMS STILL EXIST RELATING TO ARGENTINE INTERPRETATION OF THE JOINT TALKS AND COMMUNIQUE DURING THE VISIT OF SECRETARY VANCE. THE GOA INSISTS THAT WE PROMISED HEAVY WATER PRODUCTION TECHNOLOGY FOR ARTIFICATION OF TLATELOLCO AND FULL SCOPE SAFEGUARDS. NEVERTHELESS, THE GOA IS INTERESTED IN EXAMINING THE US MODEL AGREEMENT FOR NUCLEAR COOPERATION AND CLAIMS THAT RESOLUTIONS CAN BE FOUND BY JOINTLY REVIEWING THE VARIOUS ISSUES IN OPEN DISCUSSIONS. SINCE ARGENTINA HAS ANNOUNCED RATIFICATION OF TLATELOLCO AND HAS INDICATED ITS INTENTION TO FOLLOW WITH FULL-SCOPE SAFEGUARDS, IT SEEMS IT IS NOW UP TO THE US TO FOLLOW UP, AS MENTIONED IN THE NOVEMBER TALKS, WITH DISCUSSIONS
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ON EXPANDED NUCLEAR COOPERATION. END SUMMARY.

2. THE VISIT OF AMB. SMITH TO BRAZIL RECEIVED VERY LITTLE PRESS COVERAGE IN ARGENTINA (PERHAPS DUE TO THE MUNDIAL) BUT DID NOT ESCAPE THE ATTENTION OF CNEA AND MFA OFFICIALS. PRESS COMMENTARY IN CLARIN NOTED THAT THE GOB STRONGLY INDICATED IT HAD NO REASON TO NEGOTIATE A NEW NUCLEAR AGREEMENT WITH THE US AND FELT THE AGREEMENT SIGNED WITH THE US IN 1972 FOR PROVISION OF URANIUM TO BRAZIL WAS ENTIRELY ADEQUATE FOR PRESENT COOPERATION. THE ARTICLE STATED THAT AMB SMITH WAS SEEKING NEW SAFEGUARD GUARANTEES FROM THE BRAZILIANS IN ACCORD WITH THE NEW US NON-PROLIFERATION ACT. HOWEVER, THE BRAZILIANS WERE NOT INTERESTED BUT DID REITERATE THEIR OFTEN VOICED POLICY OF NON-PROLIFERATION AND AGREED WITH THE US THAT THERE SHOULD BE A UNIVERSAL POLICY ON NON-PROLIFERATION OF NUCLEAR ARMS. OTHER COMMENTARY IN LA OPINION INDICATED THAT THE VISIT OF AMB SMITH TO BRAZIL WAS ROUTINE AND THERE WAS NOTHING NEW; BUT THE US DID APPROVE THE NEXT SHIPMENT OF URANIUM FOR BRAZIL, THE FIRST UNDER THE NEW NON-PROLIFERATION

ACT.

3. IN DISCUSSION OVER THE PAST SEVERAL WEEKS WITH CNEA AND MFA OFFICIALS, THE SCICOUNS WAS TOLD THAT BRAZILIANS CAN DICTATE TO THE US ON THE DIRECTION OF THEIR NUCLEAR PROGRAM AND MAINTAIN THE AGREEMENT WITH WEST GERMANY FOR A COMPLETE FUEL CYCLE INCLUDING ENRICHMENT AND REPROCESSING TECHNOLOGY BY SIMPLY STATING THEY HAVE NO INTENTION TO PROLIFERATE. MFA OFFICIALS FEEL THE US ACCEPTS THIS WITHOUT BRAZIL MOVING TOWARD FULL SCOPE SAFEGUARDS WITH THE IAEA NOR SIGNING THE NPT.

4. GOA NUCLEAR OFFICIALS FEEL STRONGLY THAT THEY HAVE
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LIVED UP TO A COMMITMENT TO THE US, CANADA, AND OTHER COUNTRIES BY MOVING AHEAD WITH THE RATIFICATION OF TLATELOLCO AND THEIR INTENTION TO FOLLOW UP "AT A FUTURE DATE" WITH FULL SCOPE SAFEGUARDS WITH IAEA (WHICH OF COURSE, AT THIS POINT, IS NOT ANY FURTHER THAN BRAZIL HAS GONE). THEY INSIST THAT THIS WAS A VERY DIFFICULT DECISION TO MAKE POLITICALLY AND

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PLACED AN EXTREME AMOUNT OF INTERNAL PRESSURE ON THE PRESIDENT NOT TO BOW DOWN TO THE US AND RATIFY THE TREATY. THERE IS STILL THE UNDERLYING FEELING WITHIN GOA NUCLEAR CIRCLES THAT ARGENTINA IS BEING DISCRIMINATED AGAINST FROM THE STANDPOINT OF NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER FOR NOT SIGNING THE NPT, AND THE LONDON CLUB COUNTRIES ARE WIELDING A BIG STICK WHICH DOES NOT RESPECT THE SOVEREIGNTY OF SELF-DETERMINATION OF NON-NUCLEAR COUNTRIES. ARGENTINE OFFICIALS CLAIM THAT BRAZIL WILL BE THE LAST MEMBER OF THE LONDON CLUB BECAUSE THE AGREEMENT WITH GERMANY WAS SIGNED AND THE COMMITMENT FOR A FULL FUEL CYCLE WAS MADE BEFORE THE LATEST DECISION AND POLICIES OF THE LONDON CLUB. THIS WAS BASICALLY THE REASON BEHIND THE EMOTIONAL REACTION OF THE ARGENTINE REPRESENTATIVE AT THE VIENNA MEETING DURING THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE US INITIATIVES IN NUCLEAR COOPERATION, MOSTLY TO NPT COUNTRIES.

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5. THE ARGENTINES FEEL THEY ARE BEING ISOLATED BY BOTH THE US AND MANY OF THEIR EUROPEAN FRIENDS, PARTLY BECAUSE OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION, AND ARE FRUSTRATED AS TO WHAT POLICIES TO FOLLOW IN THEIR NUCLEAR POWER AND RESEARCH PROGRAMS FOR THE FUTURE. THE MORE ISOLATED THEY FEEL, THE MORE DESPERATE THEY BECOME ABOUT AN INDEPENDENT NUCLEAR PROGRAM. MANY, OF COURSE, WILL BE WATCHING TO SEE IF ATTITUDES WILL CHANGE SOMEWHAT WITH THE WINNING OF THE WORLD CUP AND THE INCREDIBLE OUTBURST OF JOY, PRIDE, AND UNITY OF THE MILLIONS OF ARGENTINES ON THE STREETS OF BUENOS AIRES AND EVERY OTHER CITY AND TOWN IN THE COUNTRY FOLLOWING THE FINAL GAME. IT MAY BE A NEW ERA OF SOCCER DIPLOMACY.

6. IN ANY EVENT, IT SEEMS APPARENT IN OUR LATEST DISCUSSIONS ON NUCLEAR ISSUES THAT MFA AND CNEA OFFICIALS WOULD LIKE TO TAKE STEPS TOWARD A CLOSER COOPERATION WITH THE US, ARE IN THE PROCESS OF EXAMINING THE NEW US NUCLEAR LAWS AND HAVE EVEN DISCUSSED THE VERY OUTSIDE POSSIBILITIES OF CHANGING TO A LIGHT WATER POWER REACTOR LINE WITH LOCAL GE REPRESENTATIVES.

7. ACCORDING TO CNEA OFFICIALS, THEY ARE DISCOURAGED WITH THE CANADIANS FOR RENEGING ON THEIR ORIGINAL

COMMITMENTS AND TERMS OF THE AGREEMENT FOR PROVIDING A GREAT DEAL MORE REACTOR TECHNOLOGY AND FOR CHANINGING THEIR SAFEGUARD REQUIREMENTS TO INCLUDE A NUMBER OF FACILITIES SUCH AS PRESSURE TUBES, LIQUID METAL PUMPS, AND CONTROL RODS AT THE TIO TERCERO CANDU PLANT. THE ARGENTINES CLAIM THESE ITEMS WERE NOT ORIGINALLY AGREED TO BE PLACED UNDER SAFEGUARDS. THE CNEA IS ALSO

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INCENSED BECAUSE THE CANADIANS INCREASED THE ORIGINAL COST BY \$100 MILLION AND ARE GRIPING THAT THEY WILL BE LOSING ANOTHER 150 MILLION ON THE PLANT. BECAUSE OF THESE PROBLEMS AND THE NEW STRICT CANDIAN SAFE-GUARD POLICIES, THE ARGENTINES INVITED THE WEST GERMANS TO BID ON THE ATUCHA II PLANT. SEIMANS KWU HAS SUBMITTED A BID OF ABOUT 600 MILLION DOLLARS FOR A 600 MW HEAVY WATER REACTOR WITH APPARENTLY A FAIRLY GOOD DEAL FOR SHARED TECHNOLOGY. HOWEVER, CNEA TECHNOLOGISTS ARE LEERY OF GETTING INVOLVED IN A DEAL FOR ANOTHER "RUB GOLDBERG" REACTOR, SUCH AS ATUCH I - THE ONLY ONE OF ITS KIND IN THE WORLD, WITHOUT HAVING THE BACKGROUND EXPERIENCE OF BUILDING AND OPERATING OTHER REACTORS OF THIS SIZE. CNEA TECHNICIANS ARE SATISFIED WITH ATUCHA I WHICH HAS PERFORMED FAIRLY WELL, BUT A 600 MW MACHINE IS ANOTHER MATTER. THE DECISION ON ATUCHA II WILL PROBABLY DEPEND ON THE TECHNICAL ADVANTAGES AS WELL AS THE ASPECT OF TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER.

8. ITALIAN REPRESENTATIVES HAVE RECENTLY BEEN DISCUSSING WITH CNEA THE ADVANTAGES OF THE CANDU REACTOR WITH THE SUPPLIED ITALIAN ELECTRICAL PLANT AND HAVE EMPHASIZED THAT THIS IS THE ONLY VALID SYSTEM FOR COUNTRIES THAT HAVE CHOSEN THE NATURAL URANIUM ROUTE. THE ITALIANS CLAIM THAT THEIR PARTNERSHIP WITH THE CANADIANS GIVES THE BUYERS THE GREATEST FLEXIBILITY, AND THEY CAN ADAPT SUPPLIES TO LOCAL CONDITIONS AND WIDEN PARTICIPATION OF LOCAL FIRMS. THE ITALIANS ARE ALSO LOOKING TO ARGENTINA AS A POTENTIAL NUCLEAR PARTNER FOR EXPORTING THEIR OWN NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY TO OTHER LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES. THE ARGENTINES HAVE MOVED IN THIS DIRECTION WITH AGREEMENTS FOR NUCLEAR COOPERATION WITH PERU, BOLIVIA, AND URUGUAY FOR THE SUPPLY OF RESEARCH REACTORS AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE ON URANIUM EXPLORATION AND FUEL DEVELOPMENT PROGRMS. HOWEVER, THEY ARE STRUGGLING WITH THE PROBLEM OF DEVELOPING 10 TO 15 MW REACTORS TO OPERATE ON

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LEU FUEL SINCE HEU MAY BE DIFFICULT TO FIND ON THE WORLD MARKET IN THE FUTURE IF PRESENT POLICIES PERSIST.

9. THE CNEA COULD BUY THE LEU FUEL AND THE REACTORS OR INSTRUMENTATION FROM, FOR EXAMPLE, GENERAL ATOMICS, BUT IS MORE INTERESTED IN ACQUIRING THE TECHNOLOGY IN ORDER TO BE SELF-RELIANT IN THE FUTURE AND FOLLOW THE ROLE AS NUCLEAR SUPPLIER TO OTHER LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES. FOR THIS REASON, CNEA IS INTERESTED IN ACTIVELY PARTICIPATING IN THE INFCE PROGRAM AND IN COOPERATION WITH THE US IN THE PROGRAM REDUCING THE ENRICHMENTS LEVELS FOR RESEARCH REACTOR FUELS. CNEA AND MFA OFFICIALS WOULD LIKE TO INITIATE FURTHER DISCUSSIONS WITH THE US FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A NEW NUCLEAR AGREEMENT THAT WOULD INCLUDE HEAVY WATER TECHNOLOGY, LEU FUEL TECHNOLOGY, THE SUPPLY OF

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ENRICHED URANIUM, EXCHANGE OF EXPERTS, ETC. ALSO, DEPENDING ON FUTURE DECISION REGARDING THE NUCLEAR POWER PROGRAM, THE CNEA HAS BEEN LOOKING INTO THE POSSIBILITY OF A LIGHT WATER REACTOR LINE. (NEVERTHELESS, THE REPORTING OFFICER WAS TOLD BY ING. COSENTINO THIS WOULD BE RATHER REMOTE. EVEN THOUGH THEY ARE NOT COMPLETELY SATISFIED WITH THE PRESENT

HEAVY WATER NATURAL URANIUM SYSTEM AND FEEL LIGHT
WATER REACTORS ARE MORE EFFICIENT, IT IS DOUBTFUL
THE GOA WOULD SWITCH AT THIS TIME AFTER MAKING THIS
POLICY DECISION.)

10. THE PROBLEM STILL EXISTS AS TO THE ARGENTINE
INTERPRETATION OF THE JOINT TALKS AND COMMUNIQUE
DURING THE VANCE VISIT LAST NOVEMBER AS DESCRIBED
IN REFTEL. THE GOA INSISTS THAT THE US HAS PROMISED
HEAVY WATER TECHNOLOGY IN EXCHANGE FOR THE RATIFICATION
OF TLATELOLCO AND FOR FULL-SCOPE SAFEGUARDS. THE MFA
HAS DENIED THAT THE ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT IS REPROCESSING
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BUT CNEA OFFICIALS HAVE MENTIONED IN THE PAST THT
THEY WISH TO KEEP THIS OPTION OPEN AND ACKNOWLEDGE
THEY ARE DEVELOPING A PILOT PLANT FOR PLUTONIUM
PURIFICATION AT EZEIZA ATOMIC CENTER. THERE HAVE BEEN
NO OPEN STATEMENTS TO THE EFFECT THAT REPROCESSING
HAS PROGRESSED ANY FURTHER THAN A SMALL PILOT FACILITY.
CNEA OFFICIALS HAVE STATED THAT, IN ANY EVENT,
WHY WOULD A REPROCESSING PLANT BE ANY PROBLEM IF
IT WERE UNDER SAFEGUARDS SINCE EVENTUALLY REPROCESSING
WOULD BE NECESSARY FOR URANIUM CONSERVATION.
(EMBASSY HAS REPORTED PREVIOUSLY THAT A SUBSTANTIAL
REPROCESSING PLANT IS UNDER CONSTRUCTION AT EZEIZA
TO BE ON LINE BY 1980.) THE ARGENTINES ARE ALSO
CONCERNED ABOUT THE BRAZIL DEAL WITH GERMANY FOR
ENRICHMENT AND REPROCESSING FACILITIES. EVEN THOUGH
ALL THE BRAZILIAN FACILITIES WOULD BE UNDER SAFEGUARDS
NOW, THE CAPABILITY FOR A FUTURE WEAPONS PROGRAM
WOULD BE THERE. AS AMB. ORTIZ DE ROZAS SAID, ONE LATIN
AMERICAN COUNTRY COULD NOT TOLERATE ANOTHER HAVING
POSSIBILITIES OF A WEAPONS PROGRAM; THERE MUST BE A
REGIONAL EQUILIBRIUM (MEANING ARGENTINA AND BRAZIL).

11. ANOTHER RECENT ISSUE IS US POLICY TOWARD
DE FACTO SAFEGUARDS. THE REPORTING OFFICER WAS ASKED
BY CASTRO MADERO THAT IF THE US ACCEPTS DE FACTO
SAFEGUARDS FROM BRAZIL, WOULD THEY ALSO DO THE SAME
WITH ARGENTINA. HE (CASTRO MADERO) INDICATED
HE HEARED THAT THIS WOULD BE A POSSIBILITY. IT WAS
POINTED OUT TO CASTRO MADERO THAT THIS WOULD HAVE TO
BE DUSSED WITH US NUCLEAR OFFICIALS, BUT DE FACTO
SAFEGUARDS WOULD CERTAINLY HAVE TO INCLUDE ALL FACILITIS,
EVEN INDIGENOUS REPROCESSING AND FUEL FABRICATION,
THROUGH AGREEMENTS DIRECTLY WITH IAEA OR THROUGH
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AGREEMENTS WITH OTHER COUNTRIES FOR SAFEGUARDS ON
THE VARIOUS FACILITIES PROVIDED.

12. WE SEEM TO BE AT THE POINT
WHERE THE ARGENTINES COULD EXAMINE THE
US MODEL AGREEMENT FOR NUCLEAR COOPERATION WHICH COULD
POSSIBLY BE FOLLOWED BY TALKS THAT COULD COVER THE
VARIOUS ISSUES SUCH AS REPROCESSING, PROVISION OF
URANIUM, ETC. AT LEAST THE CARDS WOULD BE ON THE
TABLE AND DECISION COULD BE MADE ON ENHANCED
COOPERATION AS AGREED DURING THE NOVEMBER TALKS IF
ARGENTINA RATIFIED TLATELOLCO AND WOULD INTEND TO
FOLLOW WITH AN AGREEMENT WITH IAEA FOR FULL-SCOPE
SAFEGUARDS.
CASTRO

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